

REMARKS

The Applicants respectfully traverse and request reconsideration. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the notice that claims 2-4 and 8-15 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Support for new claim 5, 17-20 may be found at least on p.3, ¶¶ 2-7; p. 9, ¶¶ 3 and 4.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 7 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious based on U.S. Patent No. 5,158,278 (Auf der Mauer). However, Auf der Mauer does not suggest the transferring of at least two shingled sheets to a sheet handling machine in a manner as defined by the pending claims.

The present invention is concerned with the transferring of at least two shingled sheets to a sheet handling machine wherein the sheets in the sheet handling machine are moved at a first speed after the transfer. As to Claim 1, in the first step the two sheets are supplied with a second speed, which is higher than the first speed. In the second step the second sheet is decelerated to a third speed as soon as the first speed is decelerated to the first speed in the sheet handling machine. In other words, it is clear from the wording of claim 1 that decelerating the two sheets occurs in a manner, which is substantially simultaneous.

Additionally, claim 7 recites three sheet engagement means, the first being the feed roll which feeds the sheets with a second speed, the second being the transport unit which decelerates the first sheet once it arrives at the sheet handling machine, and the second being the brake roll which, as soon as the first sheet is decelerated by the transporting unit, decelerates the second sheet to the third speed.

Accordingly, Auf der Mauer fails to teach among other things transferring the shingled sheets to the sheet handling mechanism in a manner such that the sheets still remain shingled whereas the present invention teaches to substantially simultaneously decelerate the first and second sheets, an approach, which is not taught by Auf der Mauer.

In contrast, Auf der Mauer describes with regard to Figs. 4-7 the steps to be taken for forming a gap in a flow of shingled products 48, and for the subject matter of the present invention the actions taken at the inlet of the handling mechanism 14' is of specific interest, and here especially Fig. 6. As it is described in columns 11 and 12, performing a gap in the flow of products 48 a part of the products is slowed down and the other one is conveyed by

means of conveyor belt 28 at a second speed which is about 20 percent higher than the first speed at which the conveyor 14' operates. As it is outlined in column 12, lines 56-64, the products 48 delivered by the endless conveyor belt or band 28 at the second speed v_2 to the conveyor 14' are braked down to the first speed v_1 at the region of the weight roller 52', whereby the mutual overlap of the products 48 conveyed by the accelerating conveyor 30 at the higher speed v_2 and the second conveyor 14' is increased in accordance with the speed difference between the second speed v_2 and the first speed v_1 .

As can be seen from Figs. 4-7, once a sheet enters the nip between the conveyor 14' and the brake roller 52', same is braked down. At the same time, however, the second sheet or the next following sheet is not decelerated but still conveyed at the higher speed v_2 . Only once the second sheet also enters the nip between the roller 52' and conveyor 14', same is also decelerated.

However, it is clear that the deceleration of the second sheet is independent from the deceleration of the first sheet and only governed by the time it reaches the nip between the roller 52' and the conveyor 14'. Thus, Auf der Mauer does not teach to "decelerate" the second sheet as soon as the first sheet is decelerated.

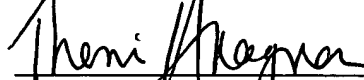
Nothing in Auf der Mauer teaches or suggests to modify the braking procedure disclosed therein in such a manner that the first and second sheet are decelerated substantially at the same time.

In addition, Applicants also submit that because claims 5 and 6 depend from claim 1 and claim 16 depends from claim 7, and as dependent claims therefrom, claims 5, 6 and 16 are allowable for at least reasons claims 1 and 7 are allowable. Applicants further submit, argued in part at least immediately above, that claims 5, 6 and 16 are allowable in light of the presence of novel and non-obvious elements contained in claims 5, 6 and 16 that are not otherwise present in claims 1 and 7.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the below-listed attorney if the Examiner believes that a telephone conference will advance the prosecution of this application.

November 26, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Themi Anagnos', written over a horizontal line.

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